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(54) Adjustable width soffit

(57) A soffit which bridges the gap between a wall and a fascia board of a roof comprises first 31 and second 33 spanning portions which are movable, one relative to the other, so that the soffit is adjustable to a range of gap widths. One of the spanning portions is advantageously provided with a plurality of ventilation apertures. Portion 33 defines a slot 36 telescopically receiving portion 31. Clip-on covers 39 conceal screw holes.

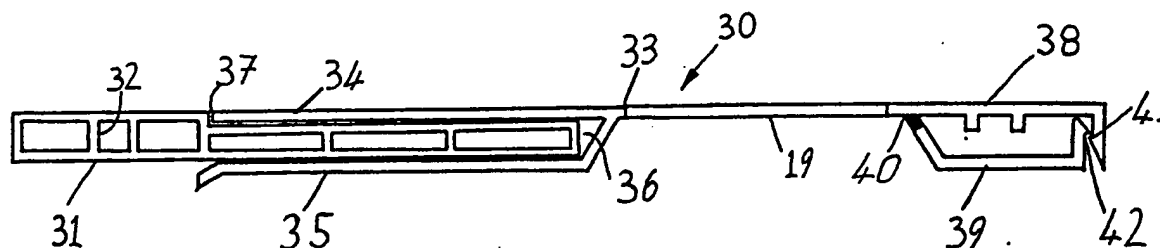


FIG. 5.

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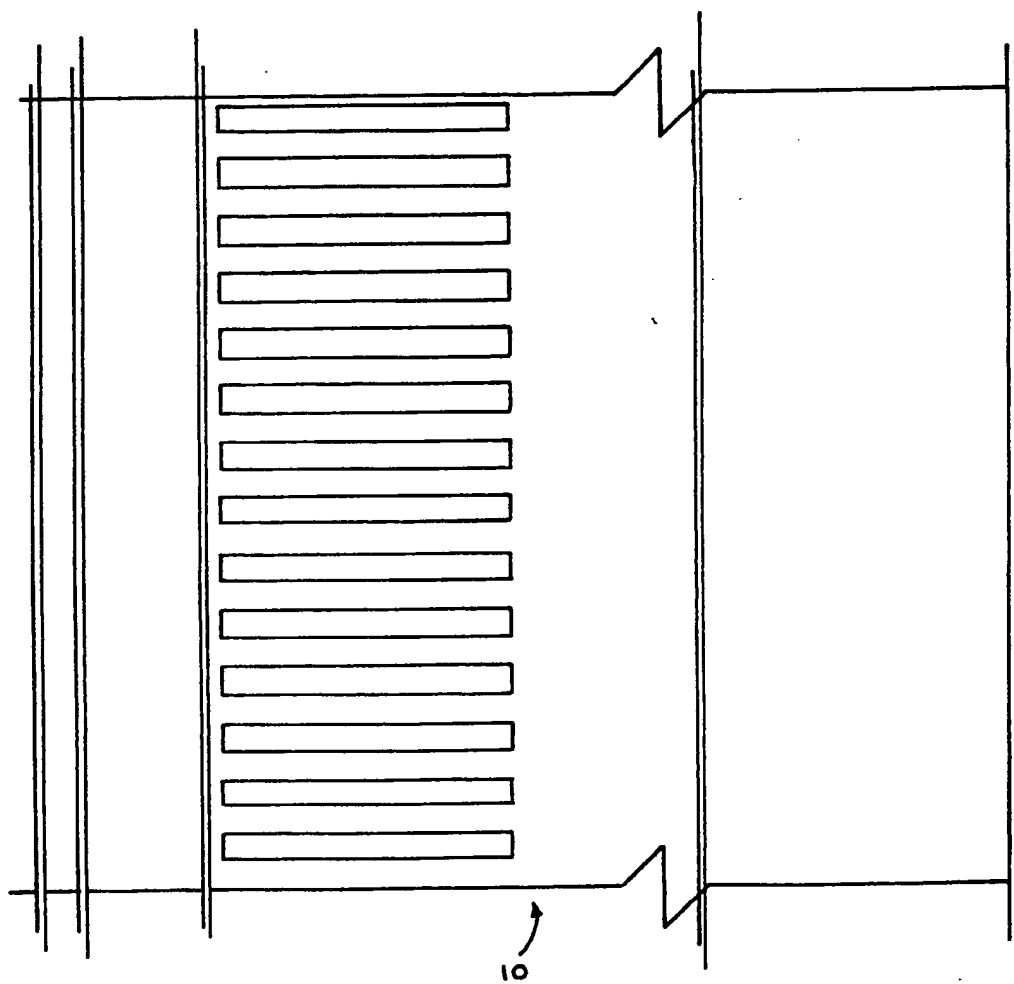


FIG. 1.

FIG. 2

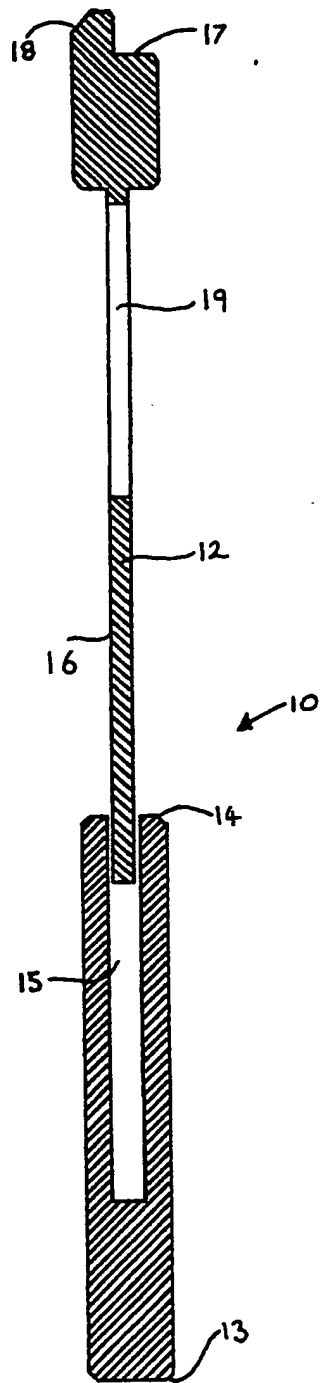


FIG. 3.

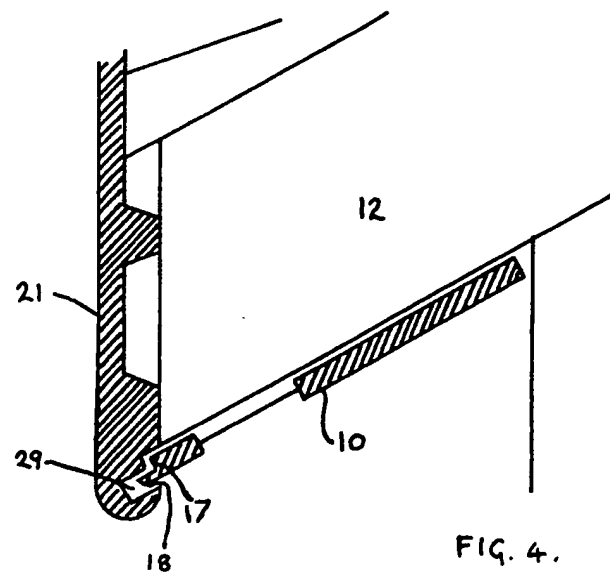
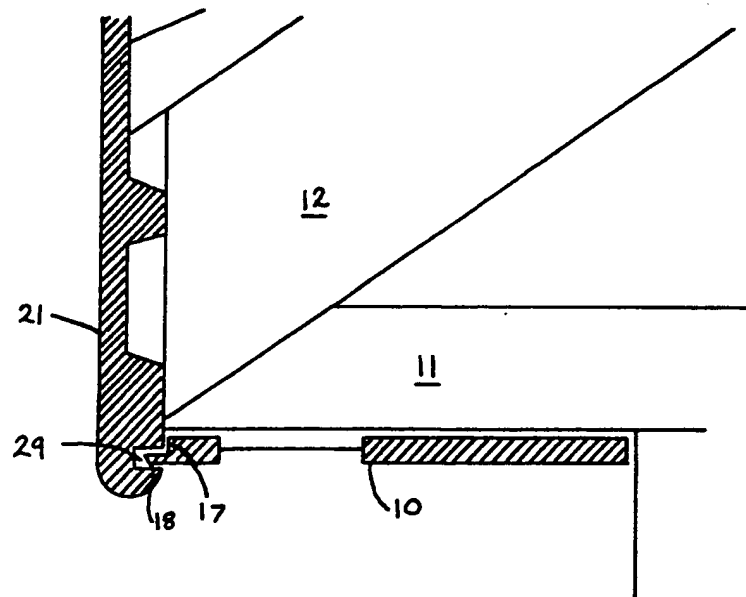


FIG. 4.

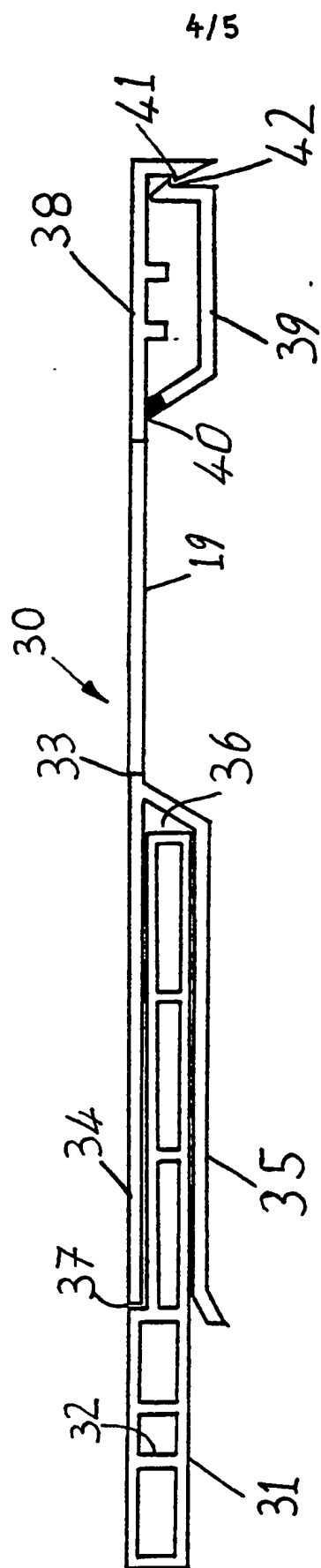


FIG. 5.

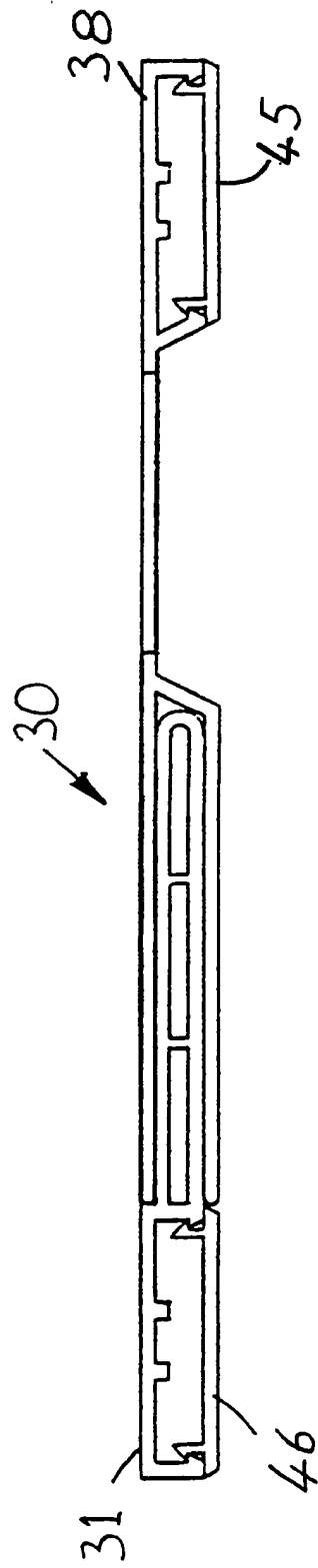


FIG. 6.

SOFFIT

The present invention is concerned with soffits, for use in building construction.

In roof construction, a soffit is employed to bridge horizontally from the wall of the building, beneath the rafter ends, to a vertically disposed fascia plate which is secured to the rafter ends. Building Regulations require there to be a continuous 25mm air gap in order to provide adequate ventilation of the roof space. NHBC requirements, however, are for a narrow gap in order to exclude insects from the roof space. To some extent, therefore, these two requirements are incompatible. It is one object of the present invention to reconcile these requirements and at the same time provide a versatile soffit which can be used in a variety of different roof constructions.

According to one aspect of the present invention there is provided a soffit to span a gap between a wall and a fascia board of a roof, which soffit comprises first and second spanning portions which are movable, one relative to the other, so that the soffit is thereby adjustable to a range of gap widths.

Preferably, the adjustability of the first and second spanning portions arises from a relative sliding movement between them, face to face. Preferably, one of the spanning portions slides in a recess in the other, so that they may be said to fit together telescopically.

Normally, one of the spanning portions defines a plurality of ventilation apertures and preferably each of the apertures is not more than 4mm wide, thereby to meet the NHBC insect exclusion requirement. Where the spanning portions are telescopic, the one of the spanning portions which is received in the other may be provided with a blade which lies within a deep slot of the other spanning portion, and the bladed portion may be the one with the ventilation apertures.

It may be convenient to provide the aforesaid soffit in combination with a fascia board, the two having complementary mating portions. In one arrangement, the bladed spanning portion has a tongue on its edge remote from the blade, which tongue is received in a groove running along the bottom edge of that surface of the fascia board which faces towards the wall of the building and the gap bridged by the soffit.

In a second arrangement, the outboard spanning portion may be secured to a fascia board, or a roof timber by means of fixing screws or nails passing through the outboard portion. In this case it is preferred that a movable cover portion is provided locatable so as to cover the fixing screws or nails. Preferably the cover portion is provided with 'snap fit' formations for engagement with complementary formations provided on the outboard portion. Alternatively, the cover portion may be integrally hinged with the outboard portion and conveniently may have a formation for engagement with a complementary formation provided on the outboard portion, such that the cover portion can be retained in its covering position.

For a better understanding of the present invention, and to show more clearly how the same may be put into operation, reference will now be made, by way of example, to the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIGURE 1 is a plan view of part of the length of a soffit in accordance with the invention;

FIGURE 2 is a section through the soffit of Figure 1;

FIGURE 3 is a diagrammatic section of the soffit in combination with a fascia in situ between the wall and roof of a building;

FIGURE 4 is similar to Figure 3 but with the soffit at an inclined rather than a horizontal disposition;

FIGURE 5 is a section through a second arrangement of a soffit according to the invention; and

FIGURE 6 is a section through a third arrangement of a soffit according to the invention.

Referring first to Figures 1 and 2, the soffit 10 has an inboard spanning portion 11 and an outboard spanning portion 12. The inboard portion has a proximal end 13 intended to abut the vertical wall of the building on which it is to be used, and a bifurcated distal end 14 in which is the mouth of a deep slot 15 which runs the length of the soffit. Within the slot 15 is received a blade portion 16 which forms the distal edge of the outboard portion 12 of the soffit. The proximal end 17 of the outboard portion 12 carries a tongue 18 which is for

engagement with a corresponding groove of a fascia plate. In the proximal portion of the blade 16 there is a plurality of ventilation apertures 19 which extend about halfway down the length of the blade 16. Each of the apertures has a width of 4mm and the centre lines of the apertures are at 8mm spacing.

Figures 1 and 2 show the soffit in its maximum width disposition. In the embodiment illustrated this corresponds to a total width of the soffit itself of about 194mm. By sliding the blade 16 fully into the deep slot 15, the width of the entire soffit can be reduced to 150mm, so the soffit is useful for spanning gaps over substantially the whole of the range of gap widths between 150 to 194mm (subject to the length of the tongue 18).

In the illustrated embodiment, the soffit portions are made from Upvc with a homogeneous skin around a core of low density cellular closed cell material. The soffit portions can be secured to the adjacent timber parts of the roof by nails shrouded in polymeric material, at spacings of, say, 600mm.

Turning now to Figures 3 and 4, it can be seen how the soffit 10 may be located adjacent and underneath a roof timber 11 (Figure 3) or rafter 12 (Figure 4) with its outboard end 17 and tongue 18 mating with complementary groove surfaces 29 running along the bottom edge 20 of a fascia plate 21. In one preferred embodiment, the fascia plate 21 and soffit 10 are constructed of like materials and are intended to be used together to present an integrated appearance to the roof edges.

Figure 5 shows a soffit 30 having an inboard spanning section 31 formed of a plastics extrusion having internal strengthening ribs 32. An outboard section 33 of the soffit has opposed portions 34, 35 defining a slot 36, within which the inboard spacing portion is received and telescopically movable. The minimum extension of the soffit 30 is limited by the portion 34 of the outboard section 33 abutting the inboard section at a shoulder 37. The outboard section is provided with ventilation apertures 19 as described above.

The soffit of Figure 5 is fixed to the underside of a roof timber or fascia plate by means of screws, nails, bolts or the like (not shown) passing perpendicularly through the portion 38 of the outboard section 33 and engaging with the roof timber or fascia plate (not shown).

A cover portion 39 of the outboard section is flexibly movable on an integral hinge 40, such that it can be temporarily moved whilst the nails or screws are being fixed, and replaced when they are in position once the soffit is fixed in place, covering the unsightly screw or nail heads. Complementary clip formations 41, 42 are provided at the respective portions 38, 39 to aid in locating the cover portion 39 in the position shown in Figure 5.

Figure 6 shows a soffit identical in most respects to the soffit of Figure 5, but differing in that core portions 45, 46 are provided at opposed outboard and inboard ends of the soffit 30 respectively. The cover portions 45, 46, again serve

to hide unsightly fixing devices (not shown), such as screws, nails, bolts or the like which pass through the portions 38 and 31 of the soffit. The cover plates are provided with 'snap fit' formations 47 which engage with complementary 'snap fit' formations on respective portions 38 and 31 of the soffit, such that once the fixing devices are in place, and the soffit 30 is secured in position, the cover portions 45, 46, can be pressed in to place obscuring the fixing devices from view.

A soffit in accordance with the present invention is likely to be suitable for all commercial, domestic and industrial purposes. It can be used on both pitched and flat roofs and (as shown) in applications both where the soffit is horizontal and where it is installed at an inclined disposition. The adjustability of the soffit for varying gap widths, and the integral ventilation apertures, provide the means whereby adequate ventilation of the roof space can be achieved without compromise to insect exclusion from the roof space.

Claims:

1. A soffit to span a gap between a wall and a fascia board of a roof of a building. which soffit comprises first and second spanning portions which are movable, one relative to the other, so that said soffit is thereby adjustable to a range of gap widths.
2. A soffit as claimed in claim 1, wherein the adjustability of said first and second spanning portions arises from a relative face to face sliding movement between said portions.
3. A soffit as claimed in claim 2, wherein one of said spanning portions is arranged to slide in a recess in the other of said portions.
4. A soffit as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein one of said spanning portions defines a plurality of ventilation apertures.
5. A soffit as claimed in claim 4, wherein each of said apertures has a maximum dimension of not more than 4mm.
6. A soffit claimed in any preceding claim, wherein that one of the spanning portions which is received in the other is in the form of a blade, the other spanning portion having a slot arranged to slidably receive said blade.

7. A soffit as claimed in any preceding claim, which is provided with a removable or movable portion arranges so as to cover and substantially obscure from view fixing devices for fixing said soffit to a building.
8. A soffit as claimed in claim 7, wherein said movable portion is hingably connected to said soffit.
9. A soffit as claimed in claim 9, wherein said removable portion is provided with snap-fit formations arranged to engage complementary formations in a fixed part of said soffit.
10. In combination, a soffit as claimed in any preceding claim, together with a fascia board.
11. A combination as claimed in claim 10, wherein said fascia board and said soffit are provided with respective complementary mating portions.
12. A combination as claimed in claim 11, wherein said mating portions are in the form of a tongue provided on said soffit and a complementary groove provided on said fascia board.
13. A soffit to span a gap between a wall and a fascia board of a roof of a building, substantially as herein described with reference to Figures 1 to 4, Figure 5 or Figure 6 of the accompanying drawing.